

**17 MARCH 2021**

**NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**HOUSING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL**

Minutes of a meeting of the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Panel held on Wednesday, 17 March 2021

- \* Cllr Steve Davies (Chairman)
- \* Cllr Ann Sevier (Vice-Chairman)

**Councillors:**

- \* Anne Corbridge
- \* Kate Crisell
- \* Jack Davies
- \* Andrew Gossage

**Councillors:**

- \* Joshua Kidd
- Ian Murray
- \* Caroline Rackham
- \* Christine Ward

\*Present

**In attendance:**

**Councillors:**

Jill Cleary  
David Hawkins

**Officers Attending:**

Tim Davis, Richard Fudge, Richard Knott, Grainne O'Rourke, Daniel Reynafarje, Ritchie Thomson, Clive Turner and Karen Wardle

**Apologies**

There were no apologies for absence.

**82 MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 20 January 2021 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

**83 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were made by members in connection with an agenda item.

**84 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

No issues were raised in the public participation period.

**85 COMPLIANCE UPDATE**

The Panel received a presentation providing details in relation to compliance of the Council's responsibilities as a housing landlord. A series of policies had been

approved in 2019 and 2020 in relation fire safety, legionella, gas and electrical safety, lifts and lifting equipment, and playgrounds / play equipment. The policies set out the legislative and statutory duties.

The Council's Asset Management Database, Keystone was explained. All information in relation compliance was stored in the database. This included servicing records and gas and electrical certificates, whilst it was noted the system was easily accessible to housing staff.

An overview of the compliance for the year was detailed to members, which had been collated on 28 February 2021. This included, for example, that 98.58% of properties had received their annual gas inspection and 81.82% of through floor lift inspections had been carried out. Members noted that the compliance rate had improved since the statistics had been gathered.

The challenges of accessing properties to carry out gas and electric inspections during the coronavirus pandemic were highlighted to the Panel. Measures had been put in place to reassure tenants that it was safe for operatives to enter properties and well as to protect members of staff from the risk of coronavirus whilst working inside properties.

A brief overview was provided of the types of compliance checks which were carried out. For example, passenger lifts and communal stair lifts needed to be serviced and inspected every six months.

The Panel noted that Fire Risk Assessments had been carried out in all of the housing blocks (204 in total) during 2019-2020. The actions identified had been categorised and put into an action plan to inform a programme of work. It was noted that there were no high risks, 528 medium risks and 37 low risk actions. The actions would be addressed on a priority basis over the next year.

Three new positions had been approved for Building Safety Officers. Their role would be to carry out, for example, weekly fire alarm checks, block and estate inspections, health and safety checks as well as engaging with tenants on the safe management of the building in which they live.

Members asked about the safety of the cladding used on the Council's housing blocks and it was noted that no cause for concern had been identified at the current time.

## **86 THE HOUSING OMBUDSMAN'S COMPLAINT HANDLING CODE**

The Panel considered the report providing an overview of the Housing Ombudsman's new Complaint Handling Code and the requirements for the Council to ensure full compliance.

The new Code had been published in July 2020. It provided a high-level framework to support effective handling and prevention of complaints alongside learning and development. The Code set out the expectations to ensure that landlords respond to complaints effectively and fairly. It also helped tenants to know what to expect from their landlord when they make a complaint and how to progress any complaint.

All landlords were expected to self-assess against the Code by the end of 2020 and to publish their results. It was noted that the Council had a clear complaints procedure, which set out how complaints would be addressed. Following any

complaint, the Council would carry out a review to consider whether there were any learning points to improve the service for customers in the future. The Code also required the Council to share its learning from complaint outcomes with its tenants' and it was expected that the Tenant Involvement Group would assist with this.

Members asked whether any assistance would be provided to landlords in the private rented sector. It was noted that a Landlord's Forum was proposed to be set up in 2021. The District Council wanted to provide support to private landlords and develop good relationships, whilst ensuring they were aware of their responsibilities.

**RESOLVED:**

That the requirements within the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code be acknowledged.

**87 HOUSING STRATEGY / HRA PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT AND ACQUISITION UPDATE**

The Panel received a presentation providing an update on the Housing Strategy and property development and acquisition under the HRA. The presentation is attached to the minutes as an Appendix.

By the end of March the District Council was expecting to have completed an additional 212 properties over the last three years, which included buy backs of ex Council properties, Section 106 purchases, commissioned schemes, acquisitions and NFDC conversions. The Panel noted that a number of general needs schemes had been completed across the District, including properties at Crow Lane, Ringwood and Kennard Close, New Milton. The Council has also increased its temporary accommodation provision with 4 units at 129 Ashley Road and 4 units at Blackfield Community Centre, Blackfield.

The achievements of the Housing Strategy and development programme were highlighted to Members. These included setting up a Building Contractors Framework which would reduce the tendering time frame for schemes, approving a policy for Affordable Rent and Shared Ownership and securing external grant funding and capital subsidy. It was also noted that the first Council owned properties for shared ownership had been sold, subject to contract.

Contractors were currently working on site at Tourlands and Blease Court in Lymington to provide additional temporary accommodation units and further schemes were expected to commence during 2021.

The former Testwood Social Club site in Totton, purchased by the Council was at pre-planning stage. The proposal was to provide a greener housing scheme using the future homes standard. This included for example, the installation of air source heat pumps and triple glazing.

The Panel noted that the Housing Strategy had set a target to deliver over 600 new homes by 2026. The direction of travel in order to achieve this was presented to members. It was confirmed that 212 additional homes were expected to be completed by the end of March 2021. 130 homes formed a firmer pipeline for the next 3 years, whilst other potential early stage opportunities and openings had been identified that could, if successful, result in a further 178 homes, creating a current overall potential for 520 new properties to 2026.

Given the current position and with five years remaining, it was felt that the 600+ target was still achievable however further work would be needed to continue to identify new development opportunities and build the pipeline. Good progress had been made but barriers and challenges still needed to be overcome. Some 'big wins' would be necessary. Smaller rural schemes were especially testing, and for larger developments sensitive balances were having to be maintained around planning interests and viability, and to ensure that affordable housing land values and costs were not overheated.

## **88 HOMELESSNESS UPDATE**

The Panel received an update on homelessness, the presentation is attached to these minutes as an Appendix.

A summary of the headline statistics of the housing register was reported. There were currently 1,267 live applications distributed across all four housing bands. 294 applicants had been rehoused since January 2020. Social housing had been offered across all four housing bands. 88 full duty homeless cases had been moved on from temporary accommodation during the last financial year.

The Panel noted the statistics presented to them relating to applicants on the housing register and their preferred area of choice for housing within the Forest. The urban areas of Totton, Lymington and New Milton had the highest levels of demand for social housing. Statistics were also provided for the bedroom requirements of housing register applicants, with one bedroom properties being most in demand.

The District Council had been required to provide a snap shot of rough sleeping in November 2020 to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. The Panel noted the rough sleeping statistics for individual authorities across Hampshire, including how the District Council compared to other authorities. Other statistics were presented across Hampshire for rough sleepers being provided emergency temporary accommodation in response to the coronavirus pandemic and those who had been moved on to settled accommodation / supported housing.

The Panel noted there had been a peak of 22 rough sleepers in the District in November 2020, but the current number of known rough sleepers in the District was now 4. Each of these had refused the offer of accommodation but were in receipt of regular welfare checks. 184 households had been offered Emergency Temporary Accommodation since 1 March 2020. 56 households were currently in external accommodation.

The programme of future work included the appointment of two new support workers. They would be embedded within the Tourlands Project to provide support to those living there. These positions had been funded for three years. Additional new temporary accommodation was expected to become available over the year and would reduce the need for B&B accommodation. A new Homelessness Prevention officer would also be appointed specifically to deal with prevention.

Members noted that discussions were taking place with mental health services across Hampshire to work in partnership together. Pilots and initiatives were being developed with local district partners which would be shared with the Panel. There had also been a focus locally on mental health partnership working. Discussions were taking place with the community mental health team and inpatient hospitals to

look how to prevent inpatient hospital admissions and reduce the burden on the Community Mental Health Team. It was recognised that many clients in temporary accommodation suffered from poor mental health. Last month out of 50 single people in temporary accommodation, 37 of them had a mental health condition.

A further bid had been submitted to sustain the previous funding received to support rough sleepers and to fund a Mental Health Practitioner within the support team. It was proposed that this person would be able to link to the CMHT to request clinical supervision and to submit direct mental health referrals.

## **89 PORTFOLIO HOLDER UPDATE AND PERFORMANCE DASHBOARD**

The Portfolio Holder for Housing Services reported that the Housing Services team were continually working hard to move forwards, this had been demonstrated at the meeting in relation to compliance, for ensuring that safety checks were made, for example. Work also continued in order to deliver more homes to local people.

The Portfolio Holder addressed the key performance indicators which were identified in red on the performance dashboard.

The Council has a duty to prevent homelessness. During early 2021 over 60% of applicants which had presented themselves as threatened with homelessness had been prevented from becoming homeless, in line with the Corporate Plan target. 273 households had been prevented from losing their home so far over the current financial year. To date this represented successful prevention of 50%. This figure was explained, and it was noted households had ended their engagement with the Council, without becoming homeless, as opposed to a fall in successful preventions. The housing team had worked hard, particularly over the last year to ensure better outcomes for those being faced with homelessness.

Private sector lease properties were required for families to use as a stop gap between Emergency Temporary Accommodation and settled Council accommodation. The success of the housing allocations policy in moving families from these properties and the reduction in family homelessness due to covid19 had allowed officers to assess the quality, location and type of lease accommodation coming back to the Council as empty. As a result it was noted that this resulted in a net reduction against the KPI target, using fewer private sector lease properties which was considered to be a positive outcome by members of the panel.

In terms of external B&B Accommodation, the introduction of "Everyone in" and "Protect Plus" Central Government guidance had had an effect on the number of households placed into B&Bs. The Council had helped 184 applicants into accommodation. The housing teams had worked hard to move those applicants onto alternative accommodation and whilst supporting those remaining in B&B accommodation. More temporary accommodation would be provided over the forthcoming year and this would lead to a reduction on the need to use external B&B accommodation.

## **90 WORK PROGRAMME**

### **RESOLVED:**

That the Work Programme be agreed.

CHAIRMAN

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# Housing Maintenance Compliance Update HOSP 17<sup>th</sup> March 2021

Richard Fudge

The 2019 Review put compliance at the very fore.

A suite of new policies were developed.





## The Compliance Team

Scott Bailey  
Gas Manager

Gas Engineers

Richard Fudge  
Service Manager  
Asset  
Management and  
Compliance

Clive Turner  
Asset  
Maintenance  
Manager

Sarah Gardiner  
Servicing &  
Compliance  
Officer

Laura Doe  
Compliance  
Administrator

Michael Roath  
Electrical  
Manager

Electricians

## Accredited Organisations

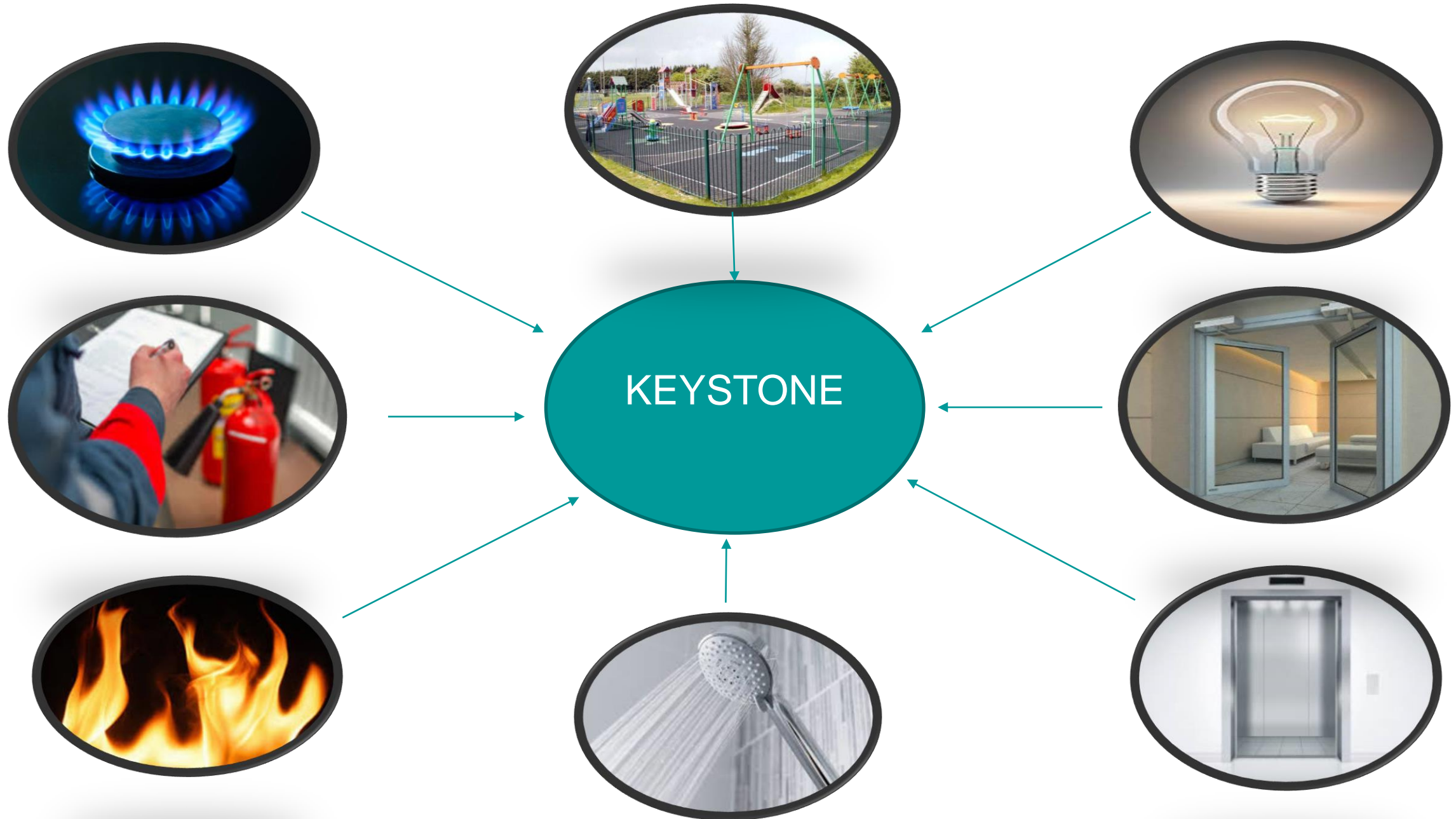
Gas audit  
Electric audit  
Webinars  
Safety bulletins  
Training



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2021 Corporate Member





## Overview of compliance

- Domestic Gas annual servicing – 98.58% - 4458 properties had gas inspections in the last year.
- Domestic electrical 5 yearly inspection – 99.18%
- Through floor lift inspection – 81.82%
- Through floor lift Service – 90.91%
- Domestic stairlift inspection – 85.03%
- Domestic stairlift Service – 94.56%
- Legionella – 92.86%

## Gas and electric

During the Pandemic, at times it has been challenging getting access to properties.

- Fear
- Shielding
- Symptoms
- Lack of engagement through mental health

13

Steps taken to work with our tenants

- Telephone screening
- Door step risk assessment
- Face Covering
- Social distancing
- Hand washing
- Ventilation

However, ultimately we need access and we follow well tried and tested procedures to ensure that access is gained.

## Legionella

Legionella bacteria can survive under a wide variety of environmental conditions although the temperature ranges 20°C to 45°C tend to favour growth. Legionella does not readily multiply below 20°C and will not survive above 60°C.

- Risk assessments carried out – actions completed include removal of dead-legs , “caution hot water signs”, lighting in loft spaces
- Weekly flushing of communal taps and toilets undertaken by Cleaners
- Monthly temperature checks by Specialist Contractors
- Servicing of thermostatic mixing valves by Specialist contractors

## Playgrounds

### **Weekly Routine Visual Inspections –by Stock Condition Surveyors**

- Includes the identification of obvious hazards resulting from use, weather and vandalism, broken parts ,bottles, litter, graffiti or equipment misuse.

### **Quarterly Operational Inspection –by Specialist ROSPA trained Contractor**

- Operational Inspections provide a more detailed inspection to check the operation and stability of all equipment and surfaces especially for wear.
- Check repairs; rust and rot; bearings, Cleanliness, Equipment Ground Clearance, Exposed Foundations, Sharp Edges, Missing Parts, Excessive Wear (of moving parts) and Structural Integrity.

### **Annual Main Inspection –**

These inspections will approximately be carried out every 12 months.

These check the overall safety of equipment, foundations and surfaces, the effects of weather, evidence of rotting or corrosion and any change in the level of safety as a result of repairs made and added or replacement components.

The annual Inspections are carried out by the Council's insurance inspector.

## Lifts

- 147 domestic stairlifts.
- 11 through floor lifts
- 11 passenger lifts
- 10 communal stairlifts

In line with statutory requirements our policy requires that through floor lifts, passenger lifts and communal stairlifts are serviced and inspected once every 6 months.

All domestic stairlifts are serviced and inspected annually.





**All other compliance currently on target.**

- Fire Alarm Servicing
- Automatic Vents
- Fire Fighting equipment
- Lightning Conductors
- Emergency Lighting monthly and annually
- 17 • Legionella Annually
- automatic doors
- Play Equipment Weekly/quarterly/Annually
- Septic Tanks
- Sewage Treatment Plants
- Fall arrest systems
- PAT testing

## Fire Risk assessments

NFDC employs the services of an independent Fire Risk assessment company

Usual position is to carry out an FRA on high risk blocks on an annual basis and remaining blocks every 3 years.

However in order to get a composite view of everything we carried out FRAS on all 204 blocks

→

All actions categorised and prioritised and turned into an action plan to formulate programmes of work.

There are no high risk actions, 528 medium risk and 37 low risk.

Action Plan in place to address these outstanding actions on a priority basis to be completed in the coming year.

## New Building Safety Officers

A further enhancement to our commitment to fire and Health and Safety approved by EMT in autumn 2020 resulting in 3 new posts being approved.

Their role :-

- Engaging with residents in the safe management of their building
- Carrying out block inspections,
- general estate inspections,
- weekly fire alarm tests,
- weekly emergency lighting flick tests where required
- health and safety checks.
- Undertaking checks to ensure that all fire doors are in working order.



**QUESTIONS?**

**Housing Strategy and  
Development Update March  
2021**



# What have we achieved?

- What have we achieved over the last three years?

Completions	Year 1 to 3	Average
Buy Backs (45)	45	NA
S106 (4)	64	16
Commissioned schemes (2)	55	27
Acquisition and works (7)	40	6
NFDC conversions (4)	8	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>10</b>

# What have we achieved?

## Completed schemes: General Need

23



Crow Lane 2 & 3 Ringwood (15)



## Completed schemes: General Need



16, 17, 18 & 19 Mulberry Close, Blackfield(4)



# What have we achieved?

## Completed schemes: General Need

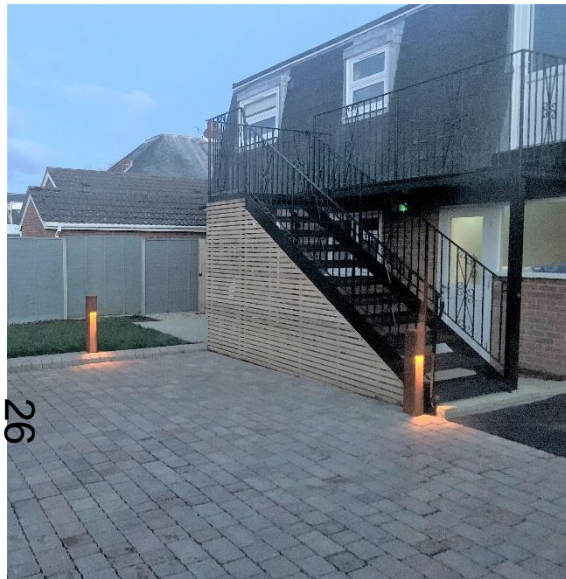
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Kennard Court, New Milton (11)

# What have we achieved?

## Completed schemes: Temporary Accommodation



26



129 Ashley Road, New Milton (4)



## Completed schemes: Temporary Accommodation



Blackfield Community Centre, Fawley (5)

## Housing Strategy and Development Update March 2021

### Development related 'firsts' during 20/21

- Building Contractors Framework
- Affordable Rent
  - Policy approved
  - First 13 Affordable Rent units acquired with HE grant (£520k)
- 2 x 'green light' Homes England audits
- Shared Ownership
  - Policy adopted; First shared-ownership units acquired; Leasehold arrangements put into place; First shared ownership units sold, subject to contract
- 15 x Off the shelf units purchased
- £365,000 Next Steps capital grant funding secured for 'Tourlands'

- What is in the pipeline?

<b>Level 1 (High delivery expectations)</b>	<b>Year 4 to 6</b>	<b>Average (Scheme)</b>
Buy Backs (45)	45	NA
Acquired sites (4)	51	13
Council owned sites (4)	19	5
Buildings for conversion/reinstatement (3)	15	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>8</b>

## Works on site: Temporary Accommodation



Tourlands, Lymington (6)

## Works on site: Temporary Accommodation



Tourlands, Lymington (6)



Blease Court, Lymington (6)

## Building contracts in negotiations: Temporary Accommodation



Old Bakery, New Milton (6)



## Building contracts in negotiations: Temporary Accommodation



Old Bakery, New Milton (6)



110 Christchurch Road, Ringwood (7)

## Contracts to be tendered: General Need



34



Gorse Close, New Milton (6)

## Contracts to be tendered: General Need



Gorse Close, New Milton (6)



Ladycross, Hythe (6)

# Where are we now?



Pre-Planning consultation: Moore Close, New Milton (16)

## Greener housing scheme – Testwood Social Club (Pre-Planning)



*“Former social club site set for housing”*

## Greener housing scheme – Testwood Social Club (Pre-Planning)



## Greener housing scheme – Testwood Social Club (Pre-Planning)

### • Future Homes Scheme

- *All new-build homes from 2025 to produce 75% to 80% less carbon emissions than homes under current regs*
- *Coupled with reductions in carbon emissions associated with primary energy creation, these homes will be zero carbon by 2050*
- *Government are going to update BRs later this year to ensure that new homes built from 2022 produce 31% less carbon than current standards*
- *Further Govt consultation planned for 2023 before updating regs by 2025*
- No Gas. Air source heat pumps. Triple glazing. Increased building fabric.
- Additional capital costs (circa 5%)

- Driving questions about standards going forward.
- A need to balance delivery objectives with our different procurement routes
- Added cost but removing future needs for retrofit and reducing energy costs for tenants.



## Housing Strategy and Development Update March 2021

- Summary by tenure and priorities

	Completions (Year 1 to 3)	Pipeline (Year 4 to 6)	Future ops (Year 7 & 8)	Total
LTV refurb & extensions	Jones Lane & Tourlands	Ambleside		
Temp Accom	27	18	0	45
Shared Own	2	12	40	54
Social Rent	170	100	138	421
Affordable Rent	13			
<b>Total</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>178</b>	<b>520</b>



## Barriers and challenges to overcome....

- **Improvements made but more to be done.....**
  - Further improvements to processes, structures and capacity
  - Selling ourselves and building relationships
  - Working with the Planners

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  - Competing with other RPs (S106 and access to HE Grant)
  - Competing for sites (heating up land values)
  - Overcoming resource issues (multiple smaller scale schemes)
  - The rural aspiration versus the reality

## Barriers and challenges to overcome....

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- 43 • **Building the pipeline**
  - Competing with other RPs (S106 and access to HE Grant)
  - Competing for sites (heating up land values)
  - Overcoming resource issues (multiple smaller scale schemes)
  - The rural aspiration versus the reality
- **Looking for larger scale openings**
  - Getting in early means lower costs but higher risks
  - Overcoming developers attitudes towards Local Authority
  - Reconciling the tensions between Planning Policy expectations, viability, and what the council needs to pay to secure affordable housing ahead of competing RPs.

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# Homelessness Update

Richard Knott

Service Manager – Housing Options, Rents, Support and Private  
Sector Housing

## Housing Register

- 1,267 live applications

Band	Totals	%
1	17	1.3
2	226	17.8
3	369	29.1
4	655	51.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,267</b>	

46

- 294 applicants rehoused since Jan 2020

Band	Count of Applicant	%
1	20	6.8
2	128	43.5
3	90	30.6
4	56	19.0
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>294</b>	

- 88 Full Duty Homeless cases moved on from TA

## Housing Register

Area of First choice	Count of Applicants
Totton	215
Lymington	204
New Milton	153
Hythe	141
Ringwood	137
Calmore	71
47 Dibden and Dibden	
Purlieu	53
Holbury and Hardley	52
Fordingbridge	44
Ashley	37
Blackfield and Langley	36
Pennington	33
None of these	32
Marchwood	25
Eling	15
Walkford	9
Fawley	7
Calshot	3
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1267</b>

Bedroom need	Count of Applicants
1 bedroom	543
2 bedroom	430
3 bedroom	243
4 or more bedrooms	51
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1267</b>



## Rough sleeping snapshot in England: autumn 2020 – Hampshire Data

Local Authority	Approach in 2020	2020	2019	Difference
Basingstoke and Deane	Estimate including spotlight	0	5	-5
East Hampshire	Estimate	1	1	0
Eastleigh	Estimate	0	3	-3
Fareham	Estimate	3	10	-7
Gosport	Estimate including spotlight	3	4	-1
Hart	Estimate	2	0	2
Havant	Estimate	5	0	+5
Isle of Wight	Estimate	4	11	-7
New Forest	Estimate	17	22	-5
Portsmouth	Estimate	29	26	+3
Rushmoor	Estimate	9	6	+3
Southampton	Estimate including spotlight	19	15	+4
Test Valley	Estimate	3	6	-3
Winchester	Estimate including spotlight	7	10	-3
<b>Total</b>		<b>102</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>-17</b>




 Ministry of Housing,  
 Communities &  
 Local Government

## Total number of people sleeping rough or at risk of sleeping rough who are currently being provided emergency accommodation in response to Covid-19 pandemic - Hampshire

Local authority	September 2020 <sup>5</sup>	November 2020	December 2020	January 2021
Basingstoke and Deane	12	3	5	17
East Hampshire	0	0	0	2
Eastleigh	4	5	5	7
Fareham	8	6	5	18
Gosport	30	25	23	36
Hart	0	2	0	1
Havant	16	13	13	10
Isle of Wight	29	22	26	41
New Forest	31	18	11	52
Portsmouth	59	91	91	102
Rushmoor	3	5	5	5
Southampton	19	20	36	32
Test Valley	15	7	11	10
Winchester	2	9	12	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>228</b>	<b>226</b>	<b>243</b>	<b>349</b>



Ministry of Housing,  
 Communities &  
 Local Government

**Total number of people who have moved on into settled accommodation or supported housing since the Covid-19 response began - Hampshire**

Local authority	Sep-20	Nov-20	Dec-20	Jan-21
Basingstoke and Deane	33	68	71	75
East Hampshire	16	17	17	17
Eastleigh	31	31	33	34
Fareham	24	30	31	31
Gosport	25	30	30	33
Hart	39	57	57	57
Havant	7	10	10	11
Isle of Wight	52	70	79	85
New Forest	70	72	72	77
Portsmouth	163	171	175	181
<u>Rushmoor</u>	13	17	17	19
Southampton	516	532	537	547
Test Valley	19	19	20	20
Winchester	0	0	0	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>1008</b>	<b>1124</b>	<b>1149</b>	<b>1191</b>

- Rough sleeping
  - By November local authorities had supported around 33,000 people, with nearly 10,000 still in emergency accommodation and over 23,000 already moved on into longer-term accommodation.
  - Peak of 22 in November
  - 4 current and verified rough sleepers
- 184 households provided Emergency Accommodation since 1<sup>st</sup> March 2020
- 56 households currently in External Accommodation
  - 14 families (on the increase)
  - 42 Single people
    - 12 Females
    - 30 males

## Next steps

- 2 new Support Workers for the Tourlands RS project about to be appointed
- New TA coming opening up– reduce B&B usage
- Homelessness Prevention officer Interviews tomorrow
- Increased partnership working with health Services pan Hampshire
- Partnership with MH Services in the New Forest
- Bid for funding for Rough Sleeper Initiative Year 4 submitted